

LYMAN J. WILLCOX

He Alone Survives!

Mr. Lyman J. Willcox, now over eighty years of age, who for some months past has been quite ill, is again able to be out, especially in pleasant weather, and made THE ERA office a pleasant call last Saturday. Mr. Willcox was one of our very earliest settlers having located in this section in 1821 ~ 37 years ago. At that time the township of Oakland embraced a large territory out of which in later years four townships were made, among them that of Avon. As the original name of the township was 'Oakland', all the archives of said township were of course retained by it while Avon and the others had to start off anew, as it were, 'upon their own hook.'

Although Mr. Willcox located in the immediate vicinity of Rochester during the year 1824, it was three years later when he settled down on the spot now occupied by the village. There had been a sort of mill here at an earlier day, which merely 'cracked' feed, but to Mr. Willcox is accredited the honor of establishing the first ---due (unreadable) grist-mill on Paint Creek, in this or any other locality traversed by that stream.

Many years since, although what might be considered of modern date, comparatively speaking, the old octagonal house, on the 'Willcox Farm,' which occupies such a conspicuous position, was built, and here the family of Mr. Willcox grew up around him happy and contented. The house itself is an architectural wonder, from its peculiar structure and anomalous arrangements inside and out, but it was suited to the peculiar taste, with a view to great comfort and convenience, of its proprietor. The farm itself was always, as now, considered one of the finest in the county, with its broad acres, its capacious outbuildings, its two large orchards, its woodlands and its other appointments. As the years flew by that portion of the farm containing the buildings, woodland and one orchard passed into other hands, Mr. Willcox retaining only about two acres, some of which was platted into village lots and sold by him. His family grew up, some of them died; others went out into the business world leaving the old gentleman the same as alone in the world in his old age. Of all who lived in Rochester when he first came here, not a soul is left while the only person residing in the township when he made it his home, and now alive, is Col. John Frank of South Avon.

So moves the world, and in a few brief months, or years at most, not a single person will be alive who emigrated here in the year 1824!

The ERA, Rochester, Mich, 22 December 1881